COMICO fifth-anniversary special

BLACK BOOK™

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$1.50
U.S.A.
$2.25
CAN.

In 1982, a few of you held in your hands our first-born: *Primer* #1. It represented, in black-and-white, the crudest beginnings of Comico The Comic Company.

As self-publishers, we stood before you naked and proud. You held our creation and within it, as humble as it was, we had displayed our very best. We promised to continue to develop and grow.

We knew that you would have demands for quality, and we knew that it was quality that we wanted to publish. We asked for your support. We promised to deserve it.

We hoped that as concerned friends you would let us know when we were failing. We promised to react to your input.

Your response was open and honest. Through you, we witnessed our mistakes and promised to learn from them. We have, and we continue to do so.

Those earliest days were exciting. Comico was not much more than a few young boys with large dreams, ambitions, and egos. We pounded out black-and-white comics for two years. Building our pride, issue after issue, we honed our product to better entertain you.

We couldn't help but be touched by your unyielding support. We became driven to thank you by providing you with what you deserve — the best comics available.

Realizing that to make this goal possible our direction had to change, we, as publishers, climbed from our creative seats, laying our own projects to rest. We passed the production chores to writers and artists whose work we respected and admired. We surrounded ourselves with a top-quality staff who we knew could get the job done.

We also added color to our books. Comico has put much thought and effort into improving the quality of color in comics. To us, it makes no sense to have incredible art suffer at the hands of insufficient coloring systems. Our flat-color books have expanded the horizons of the oldest coloring system in the comics industry. Our process-color books have stunned you with their brilliance and accuracy of color.

There has never been a doubt about the quality of our color comics. We have given you the best.

Quality reproduction aside, our comics could never be the caliber they are today without the solid substance provided by our writers. It is the good story that will ultimately entertain you. All Comico comics are intelligently written, never underestimating our readership. We are content that each of our titles stands as a unique and interesting comic that will not disappear into the fabric of generalization, as most comics do.

Comics, of course, are a combination of words and pictures. The artists who pencil and ink for Comico are among the most talented in the industry. Their work is distinctive, contemporary, and dynamic. We recognize that each artist is specialized and we strive to tailor each person's talents to projects that are appropriate for his or her work. Often we have had to search for a fresh new look that a project demands. The talents that have surfaced are freshly vital to the look of the comics industry.

Comico's commitment to the reader is paralleled only by our commitment to our creators. Theirs are the creative hands, and we make every effort to let them exercise their talents unfettered.

Comico has always intended to be the company with which artists would want to work. As publishers, we recognize that we share in the success of the opportunities we make available to the creators. We know that the reader benefits from their freedom. As a result of our commitment to these ideals, many of the best talents in comics have been attracted to create for Comico.

Now, at five years old, Comico has proven itself as a young and aggressive company. These two qualities fuel us every time we tackle a new project. This exuberance has driven us to be the first independent publisher to successfully adapt legendary licensed properties, to be nationally distributed on newsstands, and to explore new formats and genres.

You can always depend on Comico to pioneer, to take the risk when it counts — to establish new standards of excellence that will carry the medium of comics into a platinum new age.

Thank you for sharing these first five years with us. The next five will be phenomenal by comparison.

We promise.

Gerry Giovinco
Dennis LaSorda
Phil LaSorda

PROMISES, PROMISES!

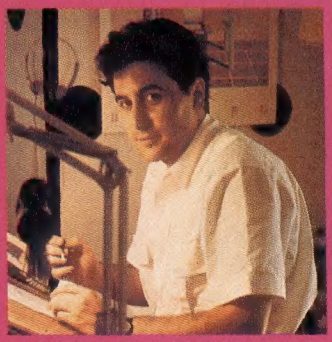
introduction

This *Black Book* has been designed as an insightful and effective introduction to Comico — our history and the comics we publish.

We believe that our comics are among the best available. Recognizing that the creators are a key ingredient to the success of a comic, we give our creative people as much authority over their work as possible. Many Comico titles are actually owned by the creators themselves. This fact will always be clearly noted in the copyright information listed with each title.

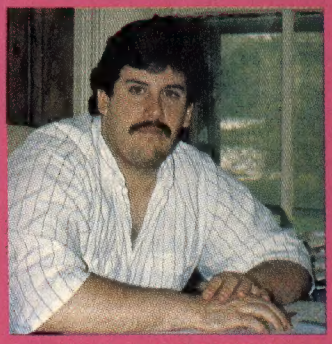
Our willingness to have creators participate *with* us, rather than *for* us, extends to this publication. The creators, whose works are displayed here in the *Black Book*, have all joined our celebration freely. Those who have not participated have done so by their own choice. Certainly, none have been forgotten as we review Comico's first five years on the time-line that will continue through each page at the bottom of the *Black Book*.

The title "creator" is often used by comics professionals to describe one who writes, draws, inks, letters, or colors comics. At Comico, we know that behind such talented individuals are a number of other creative folks whom we list in every comic we publish. They are the Comico staff — shown on this page in living color, rendered by the wonders of modern technology. Without them, there would be no Comico comics.



GERRY GIOVINCO

DENNIS LASORDA



PHIL LASORDA

BOB SCHRECK

COMICO

DIANA SCHUTZ

MAGGIE BRENNER

GERALDINE PECHT

MALLY WILKINSON

Primer #1 published

1982 **October** **November** 1982

Primer #2, first appearance of Grendel

PRIMER

Primer was exactly that. It was the comic book that launched Comico. It was black-and-white, very humble, filtered with energy, and full of promise.

Primer proved to be a valuable resource. The variety of stories therein reached an enlightened audience that created a foundation for our current, very loyal readership. Many talents who had been unheard of rose from fandom to become professionals, having *Primer* as their springboard.

— **Gerry Giovinco**

Cover artwork by Andrew Murphy and Gerry Giovinco

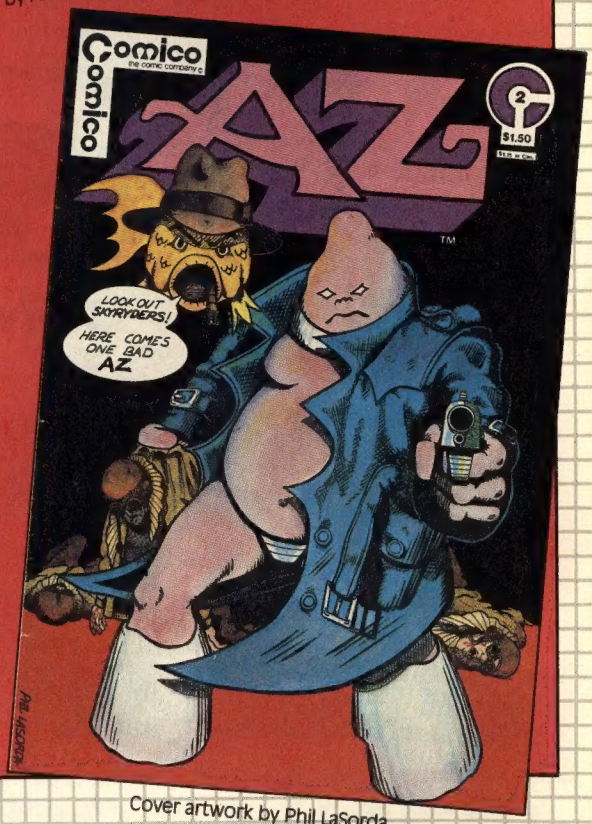
AZ

Created by
Phil LaSorda

Confronted with the problem of developing a character for our new black-and-white line, I created Az, a lovable, oversized, pink alien — the only survivor of the idyllic Azon, a planet full of color and beauty.

I then thrust Az into a *new* universe, a universe of war and hatred and survival. In order to deal with this new world, Az must make changes within himself, hopefully without losing grasp of his beliefs.

— **Phil LaSorda**

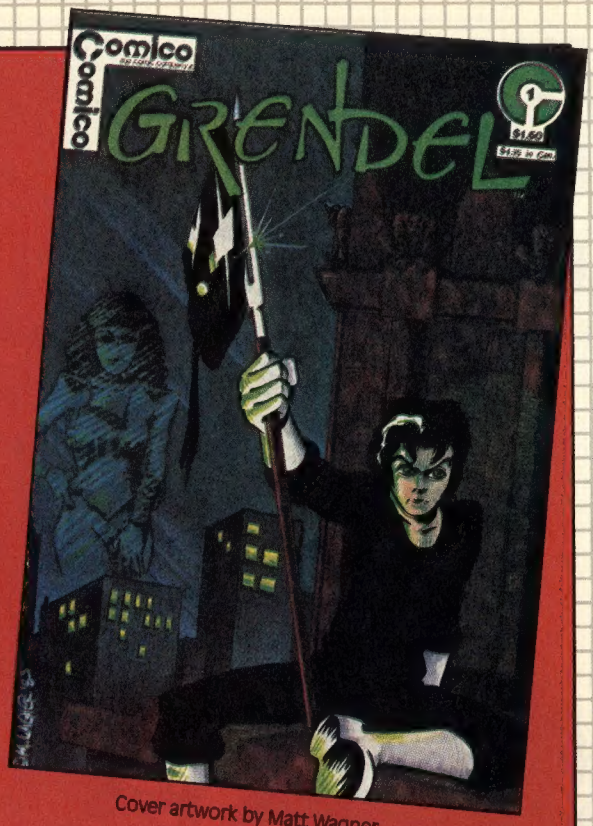


Cover artwork by Phil LaSorda

Slaughterman #1 *Az #1*

1983 | February | March

Grendel #1 *Skrog #1*



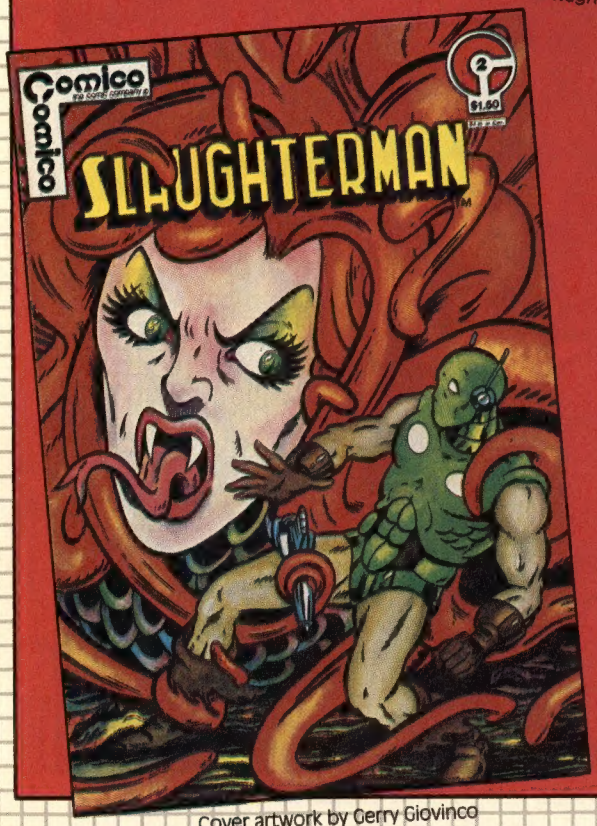
Cover artwork by Matt Wagner

GRENDEL

Created by
Matt Wagner

Grendel was the most successful of our early black-and-white line. It was the last to terminate publication, as both Comico and Matt Wagner became consumed with the production of color comics. But Grendel is a character who apparently cannot die. The concept rose from the depths of retirement and secured a back-up feature in *Mage* beginning with issue #6. The rest, as we say, is history.

— **Gerry Giovinco**



Cover artwork by Gerry Giovinco

SLAUGHTERMAN

Created by
Gerry Giovinco

Slaughterman was not unlike any of our early black-and-white titles. As creator/publishers, we had blind faith in our abilities—the most striking elements of our work being enthusiasm and uniqueness.

As with all of our early titles, *Slaughterman* had a twist: the hero was really a heroine. Morgan, whose brave warrior husband had been slain, donned his armor and defended her homeland in his guise.

— **Gerry Giovinco**

Comico's first San Diego Convention

Comico survives Black September

GRENDEL

Created by
Matt Wagner

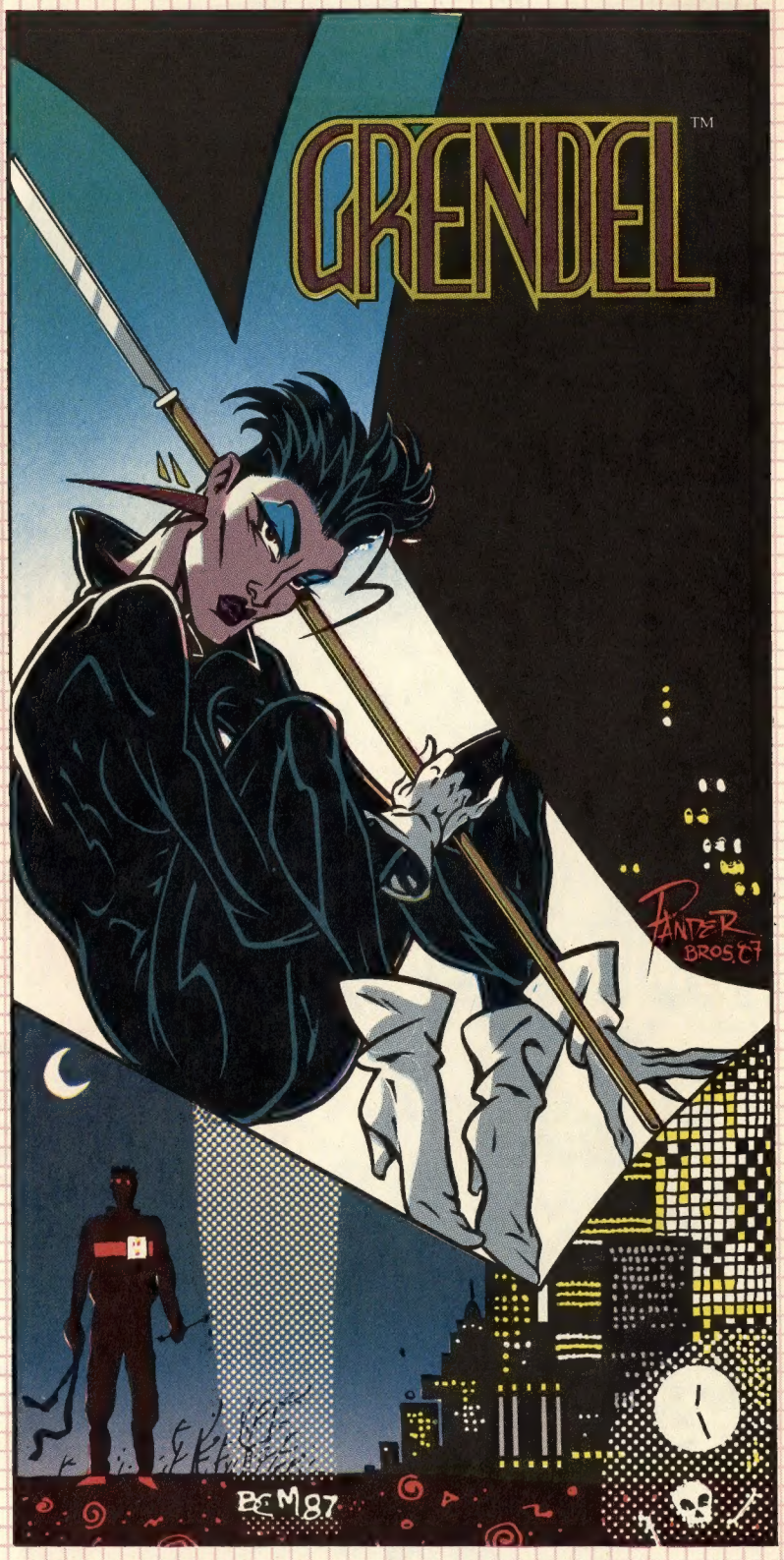
With this series I hope to continue a long examination of what I see as one of the universal and continually inexplicable conditions of life as we know it: aggression. It's everywhere you look in its varying degrees and, sadly, its abundance would seem to far outweigh that of its neglected brother, compassion.

With that theory in mind, I also hope to push and expand the borders of this medium, and to provide a showcase for what I see as some of the hottest young talent the field can produce. The series began by introducing the initial comic work of the amazing Pander Brothers, Arnold and Jacob. This young pair brought a style and flair to the book entirely removed from my own, and this was (and is) exactly what I'm looking for. I want to see the Grendel that lives in others and not merely a reworking of my own visuals. The Panders see a certain beautiful, lascivious Grendel.

The present story line concludes in issue #12 and the banner is taken up by Canadian artist Bernie Mireault. Bernie sees a different Grendel altogether and brings an incredibly fresh essence to the book.

And so Grendel will continue. Hopefully, we will present a new version regularly while remaining true to the initial concept of the character — or is it *force*? Both.

— Matt Wagner



Artwork by the Pander Brothers, Bernie Mireault, and Matt Wagner

Comico mobile distributed

1983 | November | December

First Comico Christmas party

Artwork by Marc Hempel, Mark Wheatley, and Kathryn Mayer

JONNY QUEST

Written by
William Messner-Loebs
Illustrated by
Marc Hempel, Mark Wheatley, and Kathryn Mayer

The boy lies under a tangle of mosquito netting and listens to the soft breathing of his father. Around him the jungle sweats and shifts, and the hum of insects fills the hot, greenish-black night. Across the tent, a small machine his father built this afternoon makes short, contented clicking noises to itself.

The boy begins to drift toward slumber. He knows somewhere nearby Race Bannon is keeping watch, a large man moving quietly amid the boles, a machete in his fist. There is a wicked man who has declared war upon the world and they are here to stop him.

On the cot next to him, a slightly younger boy calls out in his sleep, in a language he does not understand.

The older boy smiles. Although the jungle around him is filled with terror, he is unafraid. He rubs the loose skin on the neck of the small white dog who is curled up beside him on the cot. For, if Race Bannon fails, if science fails, even if, impossible though it seems, his father fails, still he knows everything will be all right in the end. Bandit will save them.

—William Messner-Loebs

Last black-and-white *Grendel* (#3)

First color book, *Mage* #1

Last issue of *Primer* (#6); first appearance of *Evangeline*

JUSTICE MACHINE

Created by
Mike Gustovich

One of the questions most asked of me by comic fans is: "Where did the idea of the *Justice Machine* come from?" To tell you the truth, I'm not really sure.

The concept of a displaced alien or aliens on some distant soil is hardly unique. And that is exactly the premise of the *Justice Machine*. The soil is ours (Earth), and their alien home is Georwell, a 1984-type society of sometimes less than subtle oppression.

But I also wanted this book to have the free-flowing fun of books like the *Fantastic Four*, the adventure of *The Avengers*, and the type of gritty characterization that made *The X-Men* so popular.

This book is about people—though admittedly people with uncommon abilities and origins—but people, nonetheless. The human condition is unchanging.

I guess you could call these characters of the *Justice Machine* my children. And I'm very proud of these individuals who emerged from my love of comics.

That must be where the idea came from—love.

—Mike Gustovich

Artwork by Mike Gustovich and Tom Vincent

Evangeline #1

Elementals #1 (first flat-color comic)

1984 | March | June

Last issue of *Evangeline* (#2)

Artwork by Matt Wagner and Sam Kieth

MAGE

Created by
Matt Wagner

Nominated for a Nebula Award, this first part of the *Mage* trilogy reflects author Matt Wagner's own growth and is his finest work to date.

* * * * *

Upon discovery of the fact that I modeled, very specifically, the hero Kevin Matchstick to look like myself, I am often greeted with this rather idiotic reaction: "Gee, guess you always wanted to be a super-hero, huh?" I say this because, in fact, who doesn't? And by that I mean: who doesn't dream of having some extra-normal effect on the world? Who *wouldn't* want to be a hero? The truth is, no one.

This is the point to the first stage of the *Mage* trilogy: our power to affect the world coupled with our desire to do so. In fact, as Kevin learns, it is very often our *inactivity* that makes villains of us. It's apathy and despair that result in a painful death, and effort and growth that bring a healthy one. Kevin is simply my aesthetic mirror — the same one we all have.

So, who wouldn't want to be a hero? Maybe only those who already are — for they are so very alone. Maybe Kevin Matchstick.

This story continues in *Mage II: The Hero Defined*.

— **Matt Wagner**

Macross #1

December 1984

Mage #5 begins using new guideline system for coloring

ROBOTECH
THE MACROSS SAGA

Written by
Jack Herman and Markalan Joplin
Pencilled by
Mike Leeke
Inked by
Chris Kalnick and Mike Chen

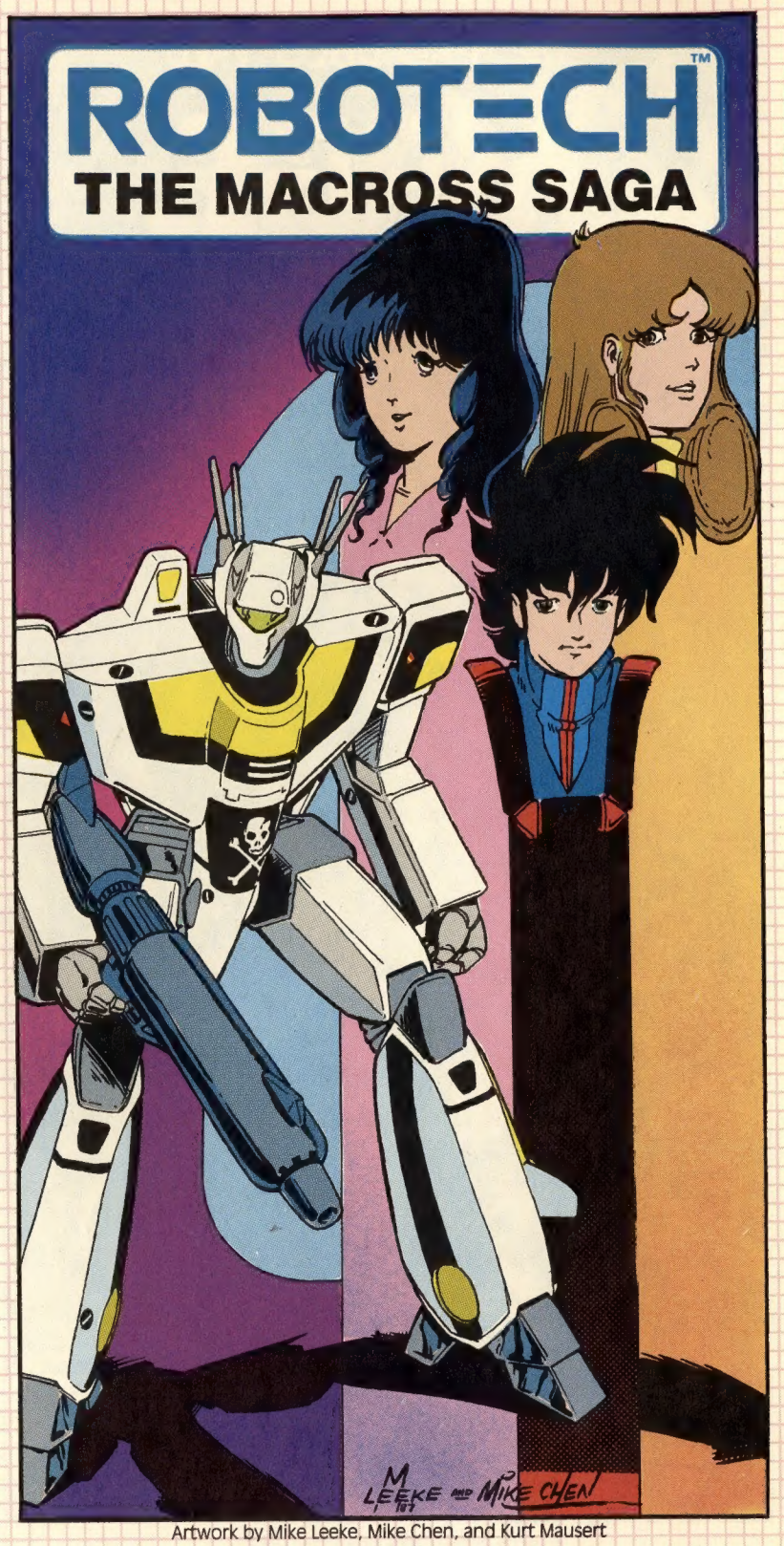
In the early part of 1984, Phil LaSorda, Gerry Giovinco, my wife Svea, and I sat in a coffee shop in Las Vegas and started talking about our mutual admiration of Japanese animation. This discussion eventually led to a licensing arrangement between Comico and Harmony Gold.

Comico was an integral part of the plan to bring "up-scale" animated storytelling to domestic television syndication. By creating a comic book trilogy which detailed the exploits of the characters who populated the *Robotech* universe, Comico would be exposing the concept of *Robotech* to an ever-increasing audience. By trying to maintain a relationship between comic book issues and television episodes, Comico would also document a television series in a way that had never been done before.

One thing about *Robotech* which is certain, regardless of the medium, is the fact that the characters seem true to life. If, when you read a *Robotech* comic or watch the series, you get involved, then we all feel as though we have succeeded.

Everyone at Harmony Gold thanks both you and Comico for realizing our dream.

—Carl Macek

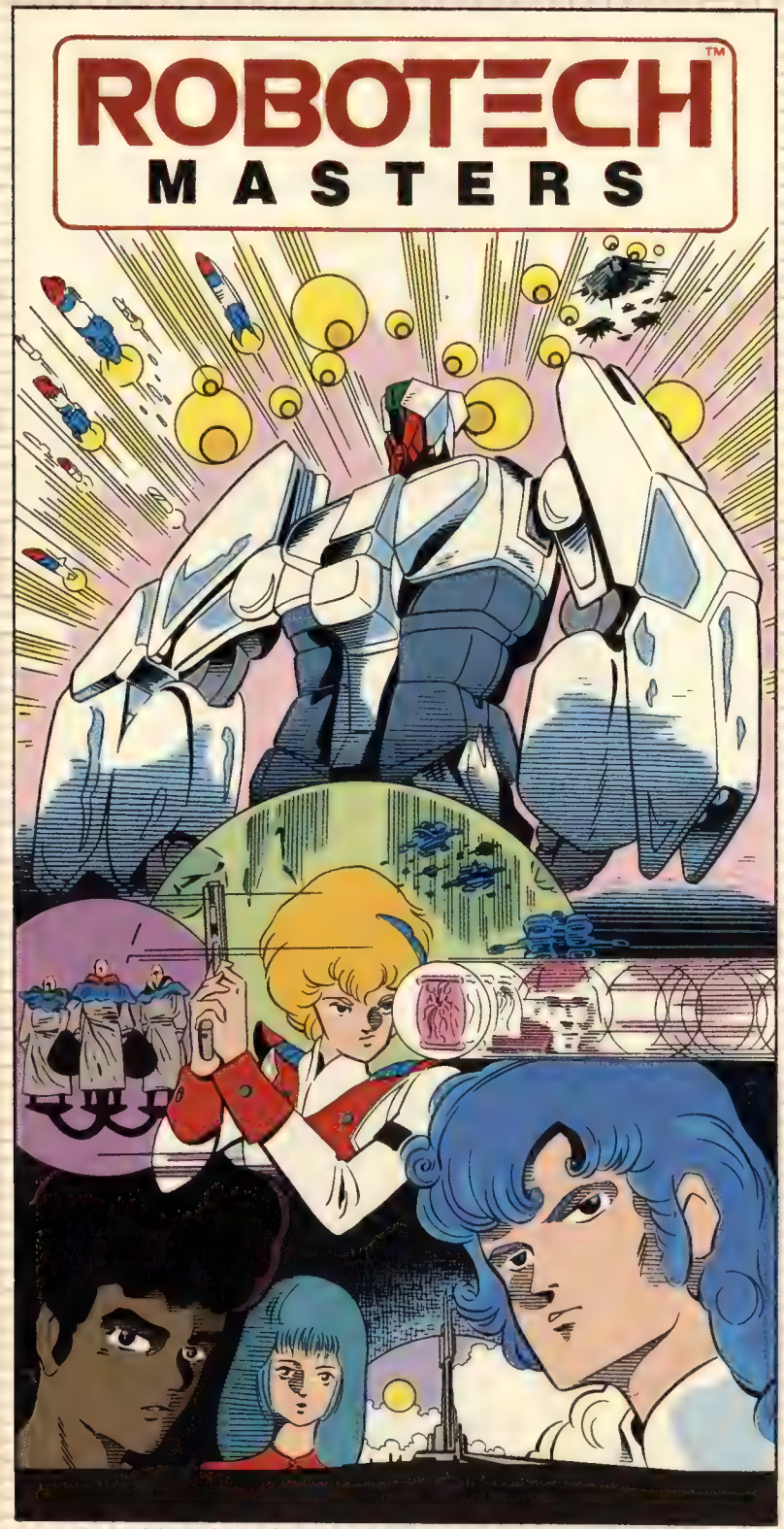


Artwork by Mike Leeke, Mike Chen, and Kurt Mausert

Bob Schreck joins Comico

1985 **January**

Robotech series negotiated



Artwork by Harrison Fong, Bill Anderson, and Kurt Mausert

ROBOTECH
MASTERS

Written by
Mike Baron
Pencilled by
Neil Vokes and Harrison Fong
Inked by
Rankin, Wilson, Poston, and Anderson

Sometimes, in doing adaptations, there is a syndrome which causes writers to feel limited—literally trapped by the material they are assigned to adapt. This was certainly not the case with *Robotech Masters*. Writer Mike Baron has brought his particular brand of style and wit into the *Robotech* universe and has enhanced the material. His treatment of the adaptation allows for a fresh re-assessment of the story line—it is almost as if the reader is learning about the characters and plot for the first time.

Neil Vokes, who has drawn the majority of the issues, has captured the flavor of the original Japanese graphics while instilling his own style and aesthetic to the project. And, as *Robotech Masters* nears its conclusion, Harrison Fong continues the reputation for fine artwork which the series has gained, while using his own unique style and technique to further enhance the story.

Everyone involved with the project has seen the power and dynamic range which exists in the material. The adaptation has brought the work to light. It is a fulfillment of the promise to bring interesting and complex science fiction to a mass audience.

—**Carl Macek**

Diana Schutz joins Comico

February 1985

Macross becomes *Robotech The Macross Saga* with issue #2

ROBOTECH
THE NEW GENERATION

Written by
Jack Herman and Markalan Joplin
Pencilled by
Reggie Byers and Thomas A. Tenney
Inked by
Tom Poston and Rich Rankin

The work done on *Robotech The New Generation* is an interesting combination of comic book storytelling and animation storytelling. Each issue of the comic is designed to creatively translate and condense a half-hour episode into twenty-six pages of graphic storytelling. The key words are "creatively translate." They were the primary operating words for the entire *Robotech* series.

In adapting material for western television audiences weaned on *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* and other toy-related products, it was difficult to include all of the subtle meanings and particulars of story found in the original animation. What eventually happened is that the *Robotech* television series took on a position all its own, drawing from the Japanese and adding a bit of western storytelling.

The Comico comics helped to define that position and create a lasting creative point of view which has helped to change the perception of the way mass audiences relate to animation and comic book storytelling.

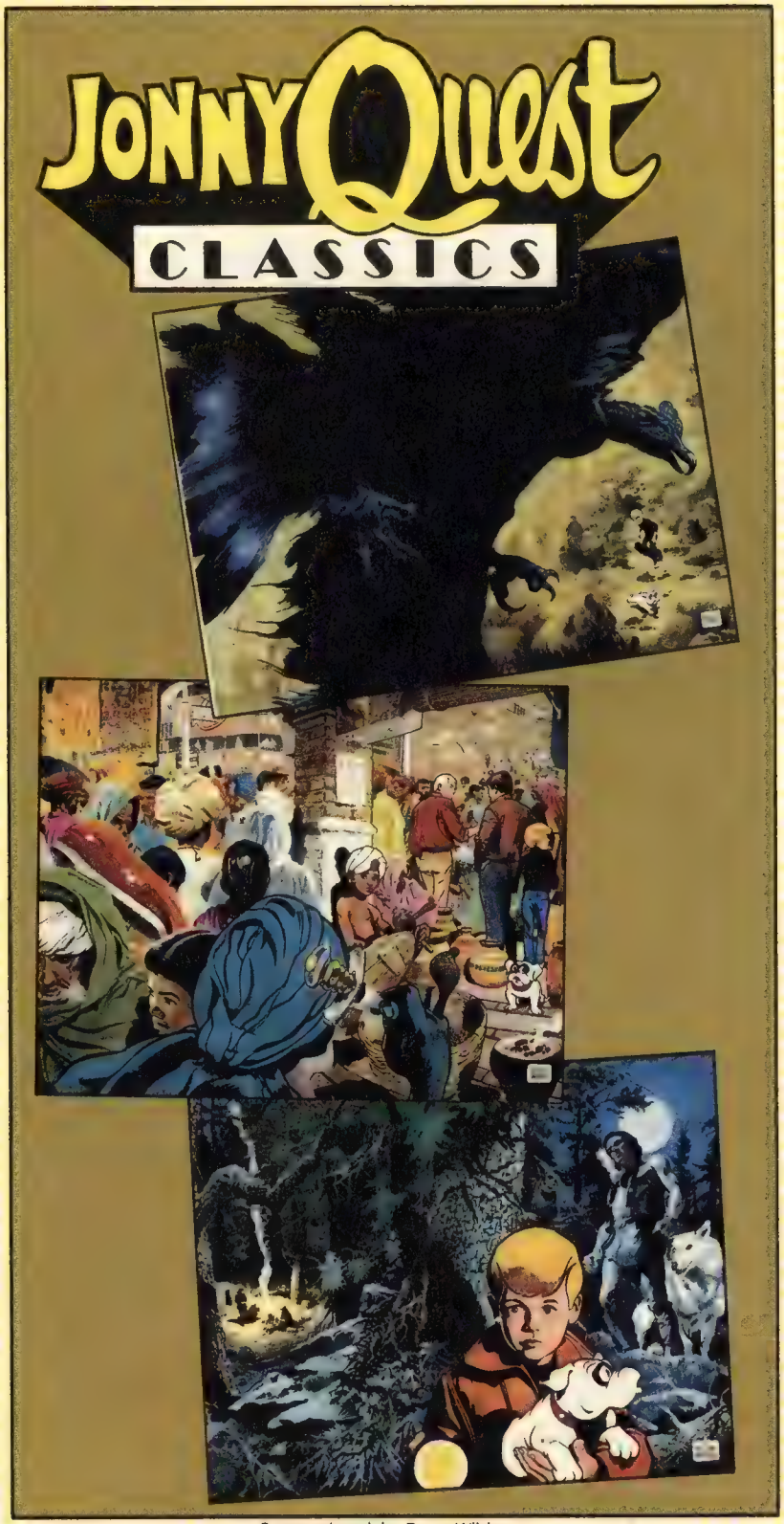
—Carl Macek

Artwork by Thomas A. Tenney, Rich Rankin, and Kurt Mausert

Comico begins "on time" schedule

1985 **March**

Grendel back-up begins in *Mage* #6



Cover artwork by Doug Wildey

JONNY QUEST CLASSICS

Adapted and illustrated by **Doug Wildey**

Jonny Quest made its first appearance on ABC Television almost a quarter-century ago.

I felt that I could create a live-action high adventure series within an animated structure.

If the characters, though cartoons, interrelated to each other in a believable fashion, the show would be entertaining.

To this day I'm amazed, but gratified, at the acceptance and longevity of Jonny and group.

— Doug Wildey

Comico took every precaution possible in bringing you the first comic book adaptations of these three classic *Jonny Quest* episodes, to ensure the highest production qualities possible in order to do justice to Mr. Wildey's stunning artwork.

There is a timeless quality to these characters and stories that escapes definition. Therein lies the genius of Doug Wildey. A true craftsman and absolute magician with the camera, he brought to the screen a sense of pure, unbridled adventure and an excitement which has touched the hearts and imaginations of generations of the young and the young-at-heart, all over the globe.

— Bob Schreck

Next Man #1

First Comico poster (*Robotech*)

March | **April** | 1985

Cover graphics changed, with grid added

STAR BLAZERS

Written by
Phil Foglio
Illustrated by
Doug Rice and Mike Chen

When Comico asked me to co-plot and script *Star Blazers*, I must confess that I experienced a few moments of doubt, as I knew next to nothing about Japanimation in general, and even less about *Star Blazers* in particular.

But I am a professional, and after a few soul-searching questions (such as: What does it pay?), I threw myself into the project. "But how could you do this?!" I hear you cry. True, I knew nothing about the genre, *but*... I knew Doug Rice! And he knows *everything*.

Thus began a massive education program in which I was strapped into one of Doug's easy chairs and the videotapes began to roll. For almost five solid days I watched Doug's collection of the adventures of the *Space Cruiser Yamato* — fed nothing but popcorn and Moonpies, washed down with gallons of Classic Coke; doused with cold water whenever my bloodshot eyes began to close ...

It might have killed a lesser man, but I learned ... of a terrific show, full of characterization, angst, humor, action: a show that was to Japan what *Star Wars* was to America. This book is our shot at adding a piece onto the legend.

Hope you like it.

— **Phil Foglio**

Artwork by Doug Rice, Mike Chen, and Tom Reilly

Mage Tour begins

Artwork by Steve Moncuse and Tom Vincent

FISH POLICE SPECIAL

Created by
Steve Moncuse

About a million years ago, Diana Schutz was the editor of *The Telegraph Wire*, and I was working behind a cash register. Both were run by Comics and Comix. Diana had heard that I doodled a bit and was constantly after me to submit something to the *Wire*. She can be very persistent.

Well, to get her off my back, I developed a little strip called *The Fish Police*. For various reasons, the strip never saw print and Diana headed for the East Coast to run a small comic-publishing company called "Comeeco," or something. So there I was, stuck with all these strange-looking characters and nowhere to go. What was a Fish-guy to do?

Time passed, and Diana and Co. put Comico on the comic-book map, and I put *The Fish Police* on the comic-book stands, and the rest was ... (Well, you know what the rest was.)

But talk about *nerve!* Talk about *stubborn!* At the 1986 Chicago Convention, Diana was *still* after me to submit something to her silly, little company.

Well, to get her off my back (again), I created a book called the *Fish Police Special*. Ms. Schutz and I finally got to work together, and on a somewhat grander scale. Was it worth the wait?

I can honestly say it was.

— **Steve Moncuse**

Robotech Masters #1

Robotech The New Generation #1

GUMBY'S SUMMER FUN SPECIAL

Created by
Art Clokey
Written by
Bob Burden
Illustrated by
Arthur Adams

Gumby was born inadvertently over 30 years ago, the result of a number of divergent factors, such as: my interest in "trimensional" animation using clay as the medium, the quality of children's television programming in the '50s, and the love I had for my own children which was the inspiration for the story lines.

Since their inadvertent beginnings, Gumby and pals have starred in over 130 animated films since 1956, and have sold more than 20 million toy figures internationally. My production company, Premavision, is gearing up to produce 99 new television episodes under the auspices of Lorimar Telepictures. There are also plans in the works to make a feature length movie for the summer of 1989.

I feel that the resurgence of interest in Gumby and pals is due to the three-dimensional realism of the simple clay boy's adventures, but also to the spirit of love which Gumby represents for people of all ages.

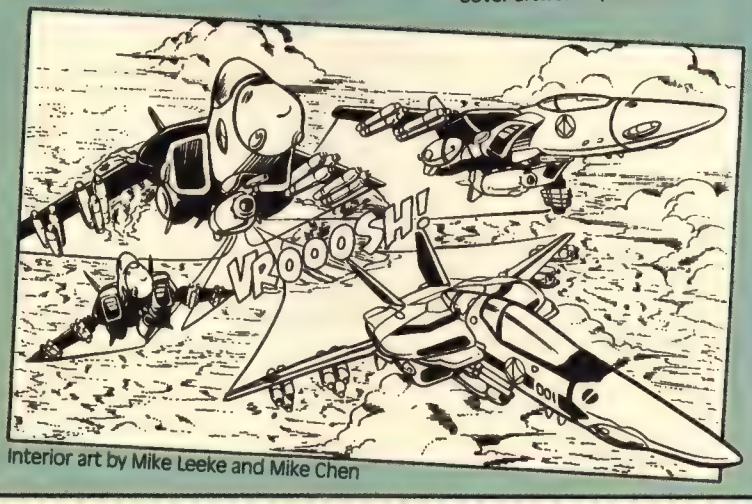
—**Art Clokey**

Artwork by Art Adams and Rick Taylor

Comico's first costume award at San Diego Comic-Con

Mage Tour ends

Cover artwork by Ken Steacy



Interior art by Mike Leeke and Mike Chen

ROBOTECH

IN 3-D

Written by
Markalan Joplin
Illustrated by
Mike Leeke and Mike Chen

The genesis of this, our first 3-D book, is pretty straightforward: we needed to bring our pre-*Robotech* first issue, *Macross* #1, in line with present continuity. No big deal here.

But it *does* provide a perfect anecdote for pointing out something we're all justly proud of — Comico's reputation for delivering the goods on schedule, all the time. I'll tell you about it:

At the 1986 San Diego Comic-Con, Comico first broke the news about this book. At that time, it was announced as having a shipping date of August 1987.

Less than two weeks after the convention, and seventeen pages into the script, I wound up in the hospital for an extended stay. I was in there for a month. It was another three weeks of recovery before I could even sit down in front of a typewriter again, and another two weeks to tap out those last grueling fifteen pages.

And in spite of all that — as you already know — *Robotech in 3-D* still shipped in August 1987 — just like Di and Bob said it would.

The secret of Comico's on-time-every-time success? We work so insanely far ahead of schedule, it's impossible *not* to put the books out on time!

Believe me — I tried!

— Markalan Joplin

Diana Schutz becomes full-time Editor in Chief

Last issue of *Next Man* (#5)

Comico's first five years brought together many talented creators who delivered their best:

Arthur Adams
Dan Adkins
Jim Alderman
Bill Anderson
Brent Anderson
Murphy Anderson
Murphy Anderson III
Vince Argondezzi
Barb Armata
Bernie Armata
Terry Austin
Dick Ayers
Bain Sidhe Studio
Mike Baron
Mike W. Barr
Howard Bender
Steve Bissette
Bret Blevins
Willie Blyberg
Aubrey Bradford
Will Brown
Bill Bryan
L. Lois Buhalis
Mark Burbey
Rick Burchett
Bob Burden
Reggie Byers
Mike Chen
Christopher Claremont
Ernie Colon
Arthur Byron Cover
Al Crain
Barry Crain
Bill Cucinotta
Marcus David
Alan Davis
Sam De La Rosa
Jeff Dee
Jim Dever
Charles Dixon
Dave Dorman
Les Dorscheid
Harlan Ellison
Mark Evanier
Ken Feduniewicz
Robert Fenelon
Phil Foglio
Harrison Fong
Ron Frenz
Jay Geldhof
Peter Gillis
Grass Green
Tom Grindberg
Mike Gustovich
Mike Harris
Steve Haynie
Marc Hempel
Jack Herman
Richard Howell
Judith Hunt
Carmine Infantino
Bob Ingersoll
Tony Isabella
Janet Jackson
Dave Johnson
Markalan Joplin
Chris Kalnick
Mike Kaluta
Ron Kasman
Aaron Keaton
Sam Kieth
Ed King
Adam Kubert
Elaine Lee
Mike Leeke
Steve Leialoha
Dotty Lindberg
Carl Macek

Comico Checklist #1

Elementals Special #1

Larry Mahlstedt
Francis Mao
Deborah Marks
Joe Matt
Kurt Mausert
Kathryn Mayer
Rick McCollum
Roger McKenzie
Ajay McLaughlin
Eric Merill
William Messner-Loebs
Grant Miehm
Mike Mignola
Bernie Mireault
Steve Moncuse
Alan Moore
Dean Motter
Andrew Murphy
Doug Murray
Larry Nadolsky
John Nyberg
Mitch O'Connell
Michio Okamura
Rod Ollerenshaw
Jerry Ordway
Tom Orzechowski
Arnold Pander
Jacob Pander
Sam Parsons
Robb Phipps
Bob Pinaha
Wendy Pini
Tom Poston
Rich Rankin
Jim Reddington
Tom Reilly
Remo
Doug Rice
Mike Royer
Steve Rude
Mitch Schauer
Lawrence Schick
Don Sherwood
Bill Sienkiewicz
Donald Simpson
John K. Snyder III
Carrie Spiegle
Dan Spiegle
Joe Staton
Svea Stauch
Ken Steacy
Dave Stevens
Rick Taylor
Thomas A. Tenney
Jill Thompson
Frank Thorne
John Totleben
Sal Trapani
Tim Truman
Michael Vance
Charles Vess
Ricardo Villagran
Tom Vincent
Neil D. Vokes
Matt Wagner
Al Weisner
David Cody Weiss
Mark Wheatley
Doug Wildey
Al Williamson
Keith S. Wilson
Chris Windle
Michael Wolf
John Workman
Tom Yeates
Dan Zolnerowich
Ray Zone

Thanks to all of these fine artisans for making Comico's first five years a success.

Mally Wilkinson joins Comico

Comico's first ABA

April | May | 1986

Justice Machine featuring the Elementals mini-series #1

COMICO COLLECTION

I guess if I want to sleep at night, a thank-you should go to one Mike Johnson who, way back in January '87, was giving us a hand in the sales and marketing end of the biz. While trying to make our graphic novels more accessible to the bookstore marketplace, he suggested a slipcase — a great idea which, unfortunately, outpriced the books right off that market's shelves.

About a month after Mike had left, Gerry Giovinco and I were still kicking the slipcase concept around, when I looked down at a pile of comics collecting dust under Gerry's desk. Whammo, it hit me! Put comics inside instead of graphic novels. Within two months, and a whole lot of brainstorming with the entire Comico staff, we had a special collector's boxed set. Silver-embossed with Grendel mask and logo and perfect for storing your *Grendel* collection, it is complete with a brand new Grendel story by Matt Wagner and Dean Motter and ten Comico back-issues.

We are very proud of this package (set for release on October 16, 1987), which is a fifth-anniversary companion to the book you now hold in your hands.

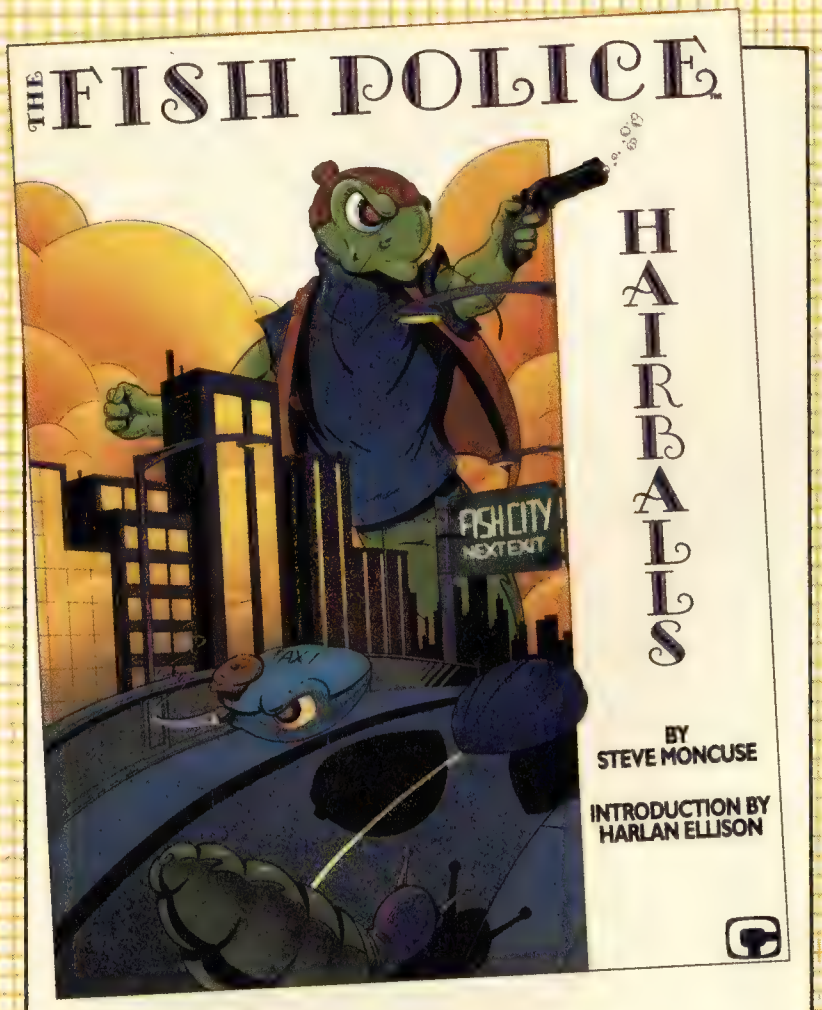
Happy Anniversary!

— Bob Schreck

Cover graphics by Matt Wagner

Mass market distribution begins

Comico's first Joe Kubert School scholarship is awarded



Cover artwork by Steve Moncuse and Ken Steacy

I'M REALLY NOT SURPRISED THAT YOU'RE HERE.
AND I SUPPOSE I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT ANGELFISH IS MAD AT ME, OR THAT GOLDIE IS IN TROUBLE.
I'M NOT EVEN SURPRISED THAT MY FINS ARE DANGLING IN A RIVER.
WHAT DOES SURPRISE ME IS THAT SOMEONE WILL STILL TALK TO ME.

Interior art by Steve Moncuse and Tom Vincent

THE FISH POLICE: HAIRBALLS

Created by
Steve Moncuse

The saga of Inspector Gill is the ultimate "fish out of water" concept of a character searching for his identity in an alien environment. The story will run approximately twenty-five issues, and, depending on my mood that final day, Gill will either find what he's looking for, or he'll be swallowed by a giant sperm whale.

I'm aiming toward the found-identity conclusion, but the whale scene would make a dynamite splash-page!

Anyway, it's always been my opinion that *The Fish Police* reads best when several issues are read in one sitting.

With over eight-hundred-million titles on the stands these days, it's sometimes difficult to remember who the guy with the pointy head is, and his importance in the current story line. I always thought the book would read better in a . . . a . . . a collection of some sort.

Hello, Comico!

They did it, and they did it beautifully! They collected the first four *Fish Police* stories into a graphic novel entitled "Hairballs." Once again, they've come through for us and made us look a little better than we actually are!

By the way, the guy with the pointy head is Dr. Calamari, and he's not important to the current story line, 'cause he's dead.

—Steve Moncuse

Grendel film optioned

THE WORLD OF
GINGER FOX

Created and written by
Mike Baron
Illustrated by
Mitch O'Connell

Super-heroes lured me into the wild and wacky world of comics, but — let's face it — so far as adolescent power fantasies are concerned, well, I never *was* a 15-year-old boy!

What do women *really* want? I'll let Mike and Sigmund take a stab at answering *that* question! What do *I* want? *Ginger* — and, finally, some *choice* on the racks.

— **Diana Schutz**

The World of Ginger Fox was originally intended as the opening salvo in my war for the hearts and minds of women, because — let's face it — women don't read comics, and why should they? Over-testosteroned men and mutants thumping the tar out of each other — not the dreams of women. So I concocted *Ginger* out of glamour, fashion, and romance — *that's* what women want! Freud told me so himself.

Bill (*Badger*) Reinhold introduced me to Mitch O'Connell, the outstanding Chicago-area commercial artist whose clip art of a man and a woman dancing seemed to characterize the whole *Ginger* experience.

Undt zo, *Ginger* was born as a full-fledged graphic novel, the most splendid color comic ever produced in America. We are all very proud, and we sit quietly at home, waiting for your money.

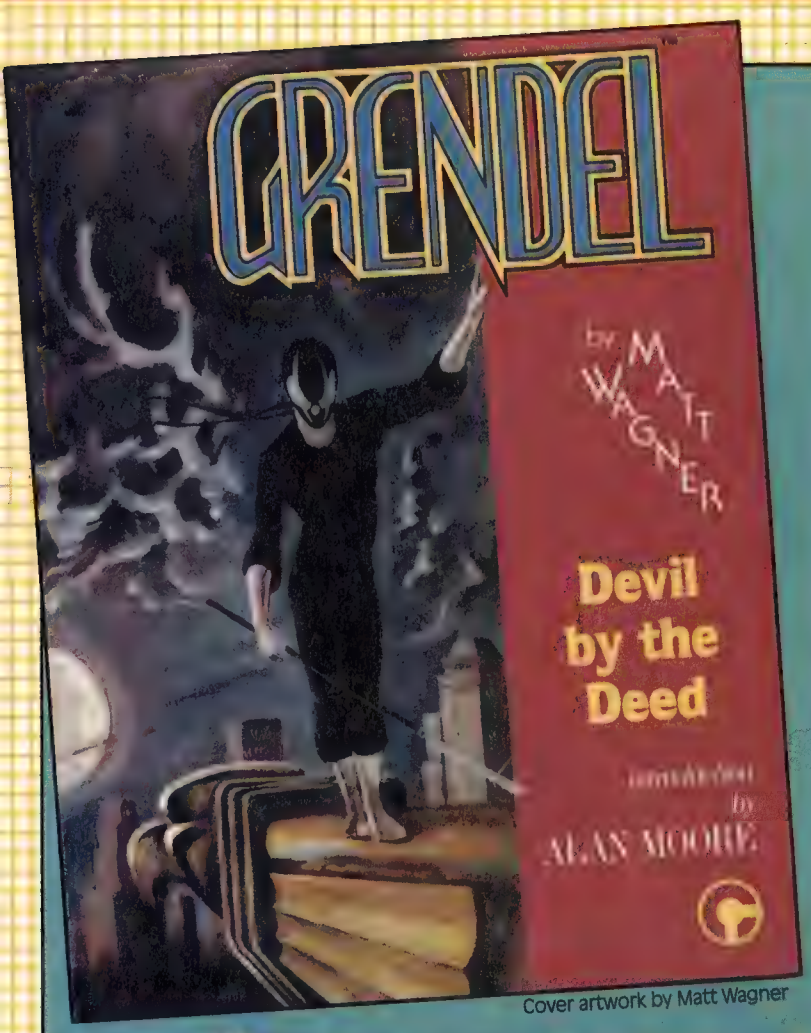
— **Mike Baron**

Cover artwork by Mitch O'Connell

Interior art by Mitch O'Connell and Les Dorscheid

Geraldine Pecht joins Comico

Ken Steacy "Comics with Character" poster



Cover artwork by Matt Wagner

Interior art by Matt Wagner and Rich Rankin

GRENDEL:
DEVIL BY THE DEED

Created by
Matt Wagner

When I originally created Grendel, I envisioned an exploration of the differences between good and evil or, I should say, the *lack* of difference. I was, and am, a believer in the actuality of many shades of grey, as opposed to the surety of a black-and-white world. I soon realized that my villain was far more captivating to me than the monster I had birthed to be his opposition. This was how I stumbled on the fact that what I was speaking of, actually, was aggression and the undeniable truth that this ugly condition is to be found absolutely everywhere and under absolutely every face. When it came time to reweave the story I had begun in *Primer* #2 and continued in Grendel's own initial (and short-lived) black-and-white title, the villain had truly become the important factor to me. As I already knew his end, I made the effort to further the persona and have it stretch above and beyond the story I was then telling. And so, Christine Spar was born and Grendel's future ensured.

— Matt Wagner

"In *Grendel*, Matt Wagner does things with comic strip design that are pretty much state of the art."

— Alan Moore

Robotech: The Graphic Novel

Maggie Brenner joins Comico

RIO

Created by
Doug Wildey

A great many people around the world have enjoyed the Western genre in films, radio, and novels.

I created *Rio* because, first, I enjoy illustrating Westerns, and second, I felt that a Western graphic novel would perhaps fill a void in today's reading market.

I like to read a good Western and view a good Western, and in *Rio* I tried to create and produce a good Western.

— Doug Wildey

Rio, a granddaddy Western if there ever was one, represents many things to Comico. It typifies our interest in expanding the horizons for the comic book beyond the superhero; it is proof of our keen eye for incredible art and storytelling; and it serves as an expression of our deep admiration for gentleman Doug Wildey and his abilities.

For all involved, *Rio* was a labor of love. The effort that went into the compilation of the stories that had previously been published by Eclipse Comics was monumental. We all challenged our skills to produce a cohesive visual package. The end result made it all seem easy, right down to the foil stamp logo that is the glitter of Doug's heart.

— Bob Schreck

Artwork by Doug Wildey

Grendel: Devil By The Deed Graphic Novel

Color *Grendel* #1 (featuring Christine Spar)

ROBOTECH
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
COMMANDER FOKKER--BREAK OFF ENGAGEMENT AND RETURN TO THE KENOSHA AT ONCE. OVER.
YES, SIR. OVER AND OUT.
LOOKS LIKE T.R.'S BEING RECALLED, TOO.

Cover artwork by Ken Steacy

Interior art by Neil Vokes, Ken Steacy and Tom Vincent

ROBOTECH:

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Written by
Mike Baron
Illustrated by
Neil Vokes and Ken Steacy

Ever since *Robotech* began, viewers have demanded more background stories.

Since the *Robotech* television series was created in an abstract manner utilizing footage from existing Japanese programs concatenated into a multi-part saga which told an entirely different story, the "back-story" of *Robotech* was an original work. The basic plot was developed as *Robotech* was being written in the fall of 1984 through early spring of 1985.

When Comico approached Harmony Gold with the concept of doing an "original" story featuring characters and events in the *Robotech* saga, it was natural that the "prequel" to the story should be told. Enter *Robotech: The Graphic Novel.*

The creative process was exercised to the fullest. Mike Baron and Neil Vokes were given an extended plot outline (something like a short story). Mike worked out the details of the actual comic book storytelling and supplied the dialogue. Every step of the process was cross-referenced in order to provide a logical and informative "back-story" to enhance the actual *Robotech* story line.

If the acceptance of this original story is any indication, then the *Robotech* saga will not end with the original 85 episodes. There are more worlds to explore and more adventures to experience.

—Carl Macek

The World of Ginger Fox Graphic Novel

Last issue of *Mage* (#15)

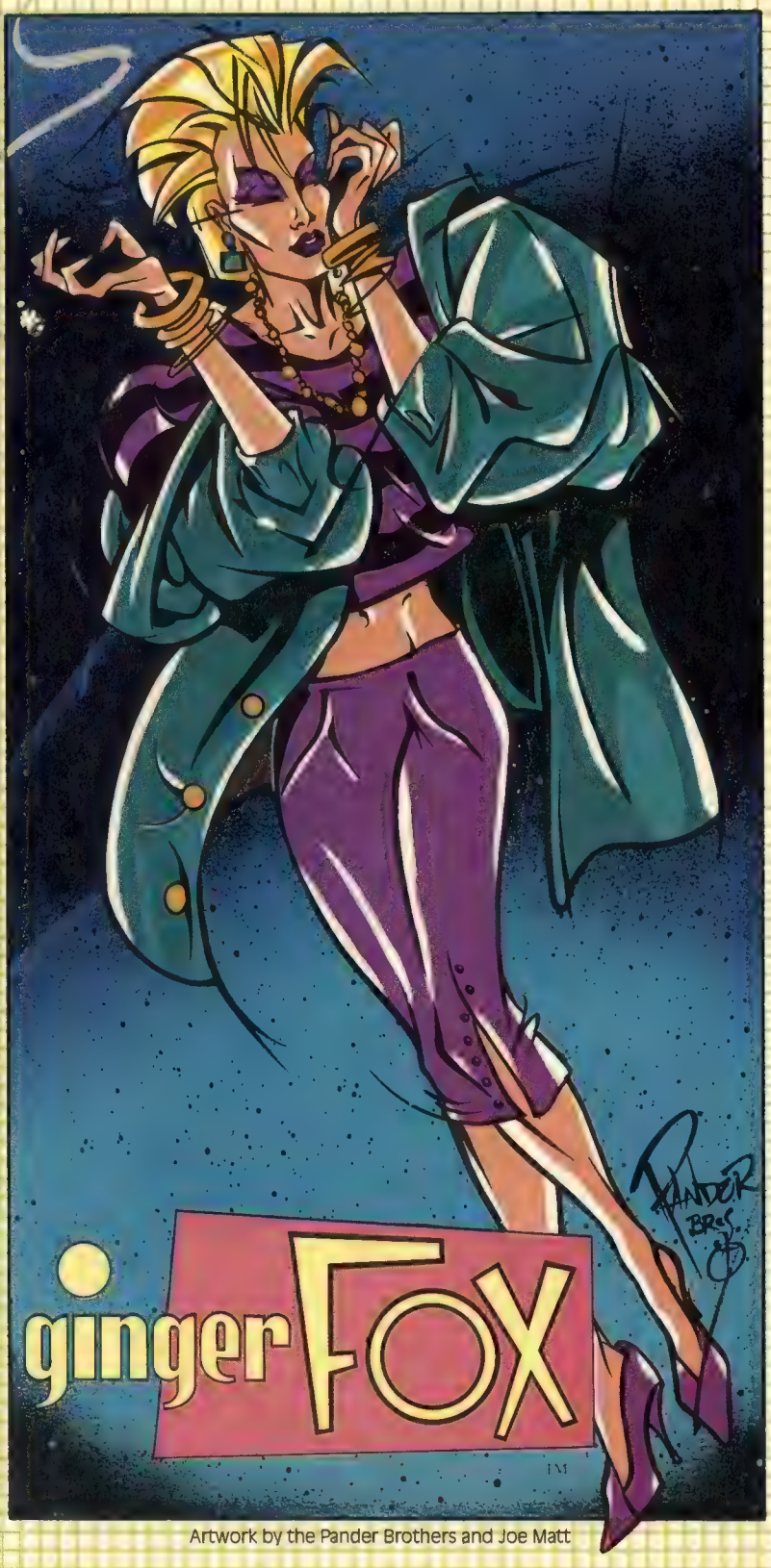
GINGER FOX

Created by
Mike Baron

I started thinking about *Ginger* when Diana Schutz was still with *The Telegraph Wire*, asking the musical question, "Chercher la femme?" Excuse my French, but that means, "Where are the women?" At least it does phonetically. What she meant was, where are the believable women in comics, to entice women to read comics? Where, indeed? For, as we all know, comics are still largely the domain of adolescent male power fantasies, although it's changing—hurray, hurray! I was up to my lobes in adolescent male power fantasies at the time, so I too began to snort around, looking for a change.

Ginger is my soap opera about the movies. In retrospect, I would have included less kung fu and more romance in the graphic novel. But now that *Ginger* is about to become a mini-series, I can set things right—I can concentrate on sleaze and scandal, character and romance. So *Ginger* is coming, and the Pander Brothers are drawing. Stay tuned.

—Mike Baron



Artwork by the Pander Brothers and Joe Matt

End of *Mage*/Christmas party

1986 **December**

Office expansion

Artwork by Adam Kubert

JEZEBEL JADE

Written by
William Messner-Loebs
Illustrated by
Adam Kubert

Years before he became a bodyguard/tutor for Jonny Quest, Race Bannon meets the adventuress Jezebel Jade in Hong Kong, while the future of humankind hangs in the balance.

* * * * *

This is her city. Her name is Jade and she knows and is known on every back street, every junk, and every dockside tavern. This is not the Hong Kong of gleaming steel skyscrapers or carefully tended tourist "shrines." No, this is a much older Hong Kong, where legend and corruption mix and no one is really safe.

This is the Hong Kong of dark, crowded markets, where embittered ex-colonials rub shoulders with revolutionaries and slave traders, where any vice is available and plots are hatched with a sideward glance and a scribbled note.

There is a separate floating city of junks, whose inhabitants never touch the land, and rich men, whose wealth is not their own, who never see the sun.

It is a strange place, filled with odd corners and half-seen things, a place with many chances for sudden wealth . . . and for death. It is madness and happiness and the sudden glint of adventure. It is her city and she loves it. It will probably kill her.

— William Messner-Loebs

Comico Color Grid produced

MAGE II

Created by
Matt Wagner

This is the continuing story of Kevin Matchstick and his second Mage.

• • • • •

Better stop dreaming of the quiet life —
cos it's the one we'll never know
Annnnd —
Stop apologizing for the things you've never done;
Cos time is short and life is cruel —
but it's up to us to change
This town called malice.
— **Paul Weller**

Summer of '89.
— **Matt Wagner**

Artwork by Matt Wagner

The World of Ginger Fox appears in *Playboy*

1987 | **February** | **March**

Ginger Fox appears in *Advertising Age*

MAX HEADROOM™

MAX HEADROOM

A hot summer day, 1986, I was engaged in one of my favorite pastimes: channel-switching! In my never-ending search for signs of intelligent life on the tube, I was stopped dead in my tracks by a stuttering video image that resembled a cross between a bad Elvis impersonator and a chrome-plated Buick fender — my first introduction to Max Headroom. Something told me there was more here than met the eye, and so the investigation began. By the time I got to the San Diego Comic-Con, I knew Max was perfect for our medium.

You'll soon see for yourself, when we release *Max Headroom 3-D*. If that's not enough for you, just sit tight until later in 1988 when we unleash Max in his own four-issue mini-series.

— Bob Schreck

Comico Checklist becomes *Comico Attractions*

THE MAZE AGENCY

Created by
Mike W. Barr

For twenty years, I've had a dream: to unite my two major interests—the formal whodunit, and the comic book. The result is *The Maze Agency.*

Welcome to my proudest achievement.

The Maze Agency is the story of the relationship between two people, and their interest in their mutual occupation—the study and detection of crime.

Jennifer Mays, 34, is the owner and founder of The Maze Agency, a private detective agency in New York City. After years of struggle, she's exactly where she wants to be, personally and professionally. The last thing she thinks she needs is an amateur detective fouling up the works.

Enter Gabriel Webb, 32, a free-lance writer of articles for true crime magazines ("Why Did the Tattooed Strangler Behead the Sexy Coeds?"), and self-proclaimed amateur detective.

Half of the story of *The Maze Agency* is the investigation of crime. The other half is the ever-expanding relationship between Jennifer and Gabe.

The first half will be relentlessly logical; the second half may be anything but.

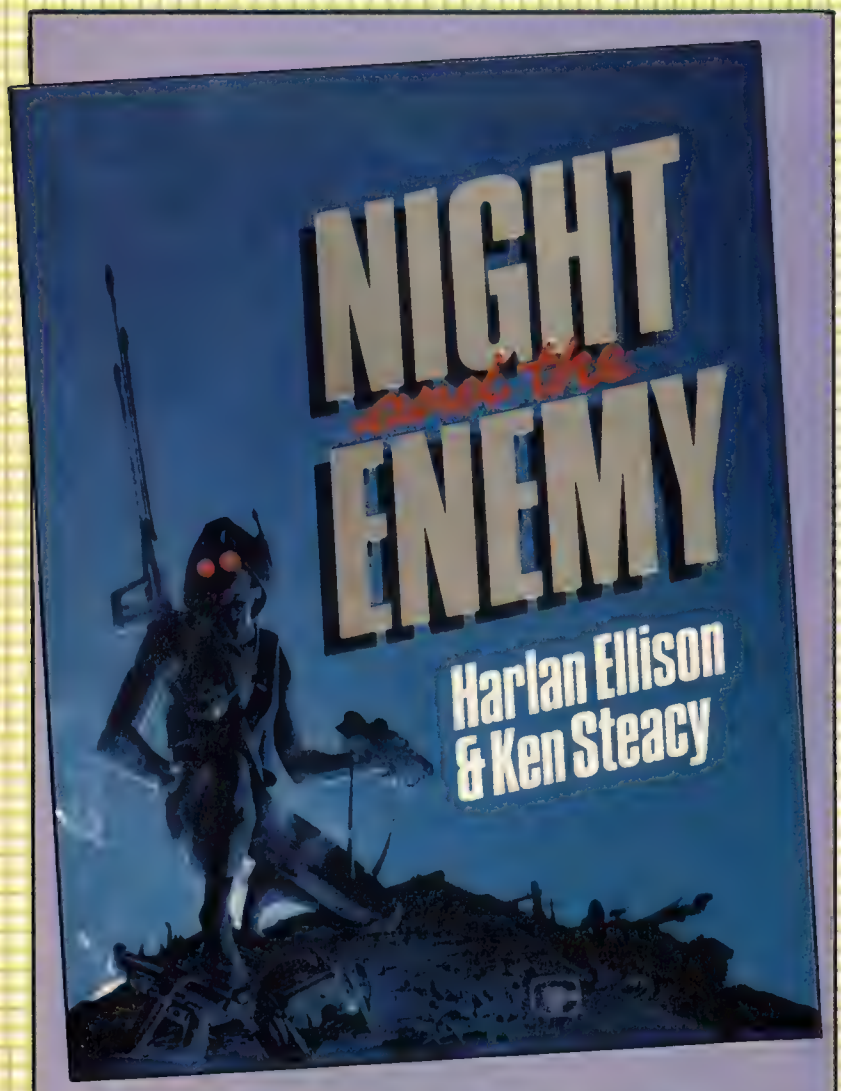
The Maze Agency: A love story about detectives; a detective story about love.

— Mike W. Barr

Artwork by Alan Davis and Tom Vincent

Star Blazers mini-series #1

Pander Bros. awarded the Golden Apple Award



Artwork by Ken Steacy

NIGHT AND THE ENEMY

Written by
Harlan Ellison
Illustrated by
Ken Steacy

Billy Shakespeare stopped by yesterday to Xerox some pages of his new play, *Not Tonight, Agrippina!*, and I showed him Ken Steacy's artwork for *Night and the Enemy*, and he was just overwhelmed by it. He issued forth a gardyloo and turned to Chuck Dickens and Jeff Chaucer and Frankie-O Kafka, with whom I was playing a little poker, and said, "Would that they with which I tarry in fields of colour have severally served my muse as prismatically." We all said, "Right on," and understood how upset Billy still seems to be from that awful John Byrne graphic album version of *Macbeth vs. The Justice League* and Chaykin's *Hamlet's Blood Knot*. I guess one can't ask for a better testimonial than that, so I am content with *Night and the Enemy*. Now if I could only fill to an inside straight.

— **Harlan Ellison**

I've never had much difficulty visualizing the printed word, but few writers activate my mind's eye as readily or with such acuity as my pal Harlan. I knew that some day I would illustrate his work, and, when the opportunity presented itself, I leapt at it.

It is Harlan's sensitivity towards characterization that is his great strength as a writer, something I trust I have preserved in these adaptations.

P.S. Harlan, tell Papa the pencils for "The Old Guy and the Sea" are done, eh? Thanx.

— **Ken Steacy**

Comico "C" logo changes

April | May | 1987

Jonny Quest Classics mini-series #1

RIBIT!

Created by
Frank Thorne

Medieval sorcery confronts the deadly weapons of modern science when the chrome-clad warlord commands his demon-hordes to exterminate the practioners of obsolete magic and destroy the orb of green crystal.

* * * * *

Wizards are fickle and not to be trusted. Worse, they steal from themselves, arguably a venial sin, but sin is impractical for the unregenerate. Thus, I confess, *Ribit!* was born from the tailings of *Moonshine McJugs*, my *Playboy* comic, and the film treatment for the *Ghita of Alizarr* movie.

Sultry summer nights are dangerous for wizards. They don't ventilate easily. The juices flow inward, causing itching and uncatalogued mental percolation. 1986 offered especially torrid evenings. Pondering the writing I had done for the *Ghita* film, and *Moonshine's* antic world, I cauldroned Ribit, the dread dwarfling-spawn of sorcery.

If Ribit is born of *Ghita's* remnants, that may account for her size—and lethal nature. If Rib is wanting in stature, her world is not deficient. It is an abundant, noisy place, filled with anachronisms. If the humor in the *Ghita* graphic novels is arch and subtle, *Ribit!'s* turf is closer to the flavor of Pork Hollar, home of Moonshine McJugs.

— **Frank Thorne**

Artwork by Frank Thorne

Fathom mini-series #1

1987	May	June
		Rio Graphic Novel

Artwork by Dave Stevens

THE ROCKETEER ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Packaged by
Dave Stevens

The Rocketeer Adventure Magazine is an experiment of sorts, in that Comico is allowing me to produce and package it entirely by myself—the reason being, I wanted to give it a distinct look and style that would both enhance the contents and set it apart from mainstream comics. The "look" I'm referring to is definitely '30s, but more specifically "'30s pulp." And the covers will feature full paintings in the classic pulp tradition.

In a delightful contrast, Michael Kaluta and Elaine Lee have contributed their version of the long-absent kid-gang theme with *The Galactic Girl Guides*. Watch young Drucilla and her pals build egg-tossing robots, race homemade rockets, and cause absolute mayhem wherever they go. It's pure fun — and wait'll you see the art!

— Dave Stevens

Artwork by Michael Kaluta

Gumby's Summer Fun Special #1

Robotech in 3-D #1

Fish Police Special #1

SPACE GHOST

Written by
Mark Evanier and Steve Rude
Illustrated by
Steve Rude, Willie Blyberg, and Ken Steacy

Space Ghost premiered in September of '66. It was straight super-hero stuff with an aura of power that nobody but Jack Kirby has been able to pull off for me.

All the effects, voices, backgrounds, and especially the music were first-rate. The plots and characterization were very basic and, therefore, relied on strong dramatic content to grab the viewer. I was amazed, after years of thinking otherwise, that each of these cartoons was barely over six minutes long!

When I set out to take on this project, I studied extensively from the show's original model sheets. For the most part, these were done by Alex Toth — and, having seen well over a thousand of these sheets, I am now convinced that the man is a genius. Alex had a certain knack for proportion that I wanted to pick up as well. From the outset it became clear that knowing these characters as well as I do and knowing how to *draw* them were two different things. I found little Blip came much more easily once I drew from real monkeys at the zoo.

Most important to me was to capture the dramatic essence of this show while keeping things simple. And I can tell you my drawing ability benefited a lot from this.

— Steve Rude

Artwork by Steve Rude and Ken Steacy

Fish Police Graphic Novel

The Comico Black Book #1

Published by Comico The Comic Company
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COMICO THE COMIC COMPANY
'87